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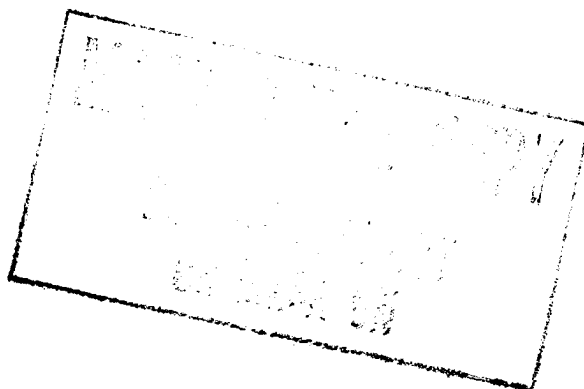
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Military Capabilities of the Smaller Persian Gulf States

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A Research Paper



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NESA 84-10237
August 1984

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Military Capabilities of the Smaller Persian Gulf States

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A Research Paper

This paper was prepared by [redacted]
Office of Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis. It
was coordinated with the Directorate of
Operations. Comments and queries are welcome and
may be directed to the Chief, Persian Gulf
Division, NESA [redacted]

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Secret**Military Capabilities
of the Smaller
Persian Gulf States**

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Summary

*Information available
as of 2 July 1984
was used in this report.*

The outbreak of the Iran-Iraq war in 1980 and the possibility that the conflict might spread throughout the Persian Gulf region have imparted a sense of urgency to efforts by the smaller Gulf states—United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, and Bahrain—to increase their military capabilities. The acquisition of modern weapon systems costing over \$5 billion and the pursuit of regional military cooperation are at the center of these efforts.

Nonetheless, current programs, even when fully implemented, will not provide these states with an adequate defense, in our view. All of the smaller Gulf states have small populations, limiting the extent of their military expansion programs. Moreover, these states soon will have acquired as much modern equipment as they are capable of absorbing, in our judgment. Because of such constraints, they will continue to depend on other countries to guarantee their security.

The armed forces of the smaller Gulf states will remain weak compared to those of Iran and Iraq:

- The air and air defense forces of the smaller Gulf states cannot effectively defend vital oil facilities and military installations or adequately support their naval and ground forces. A principal liability is the proximity of Iranian airbases, which sharply reduces warning time.
- The navies cannot prevent a concerted effort to impede shipping within the Persian Gulf or through the Strait of Hormuz. The navies have inadequate air defense and no minesweeping capability, but their modern antiship missiles could inflict substantial losses on hostile surface forces.
- The armies, although relatively well equipped and mobile, are small and poorly motivated and would be quickly overrun by determined invading forces.

Serious manpower and operational deficiencies will continue to plague the smaller Gulf states:

- The various armed forces receive little training in complex tactical situations or in coordinating ground, air, and sea operations. Efforts to improve training are under way but are unlikely to produce substantial increases in military effectiveness for several years.
- The states have difficulty maintaining their equipment even in peacetime, and the acquisition of more modern arms will further strain maintenance capabilities and reduce operational readiness.

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- The smaller Gulf states are all experiencing acute manpower shortages and will continue to depend on foreign personnel to maintain and operate their military equipment. Although programs are under way in all of the countries to train native personnel, these countries do not have a large enough skilled manpower base to staff adequately their military establishments.

Military coordination among the Gulf states, which could alleviate some of the weaknesses of the individual armed forces, is at a rudimentary stage. Saudi Arabia and the smaller Gulf states formed the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in 1981, in part to improve military cooperation. We judge, however, that a substantial amount of joint training and organization remains to be accomplished before the Gulf military forces can work together effectively. Still, these states together field a sizable and generally well-equipped force that could contribute to a multilateral defense of the Arabian Peninsula in conjunction with other powers.

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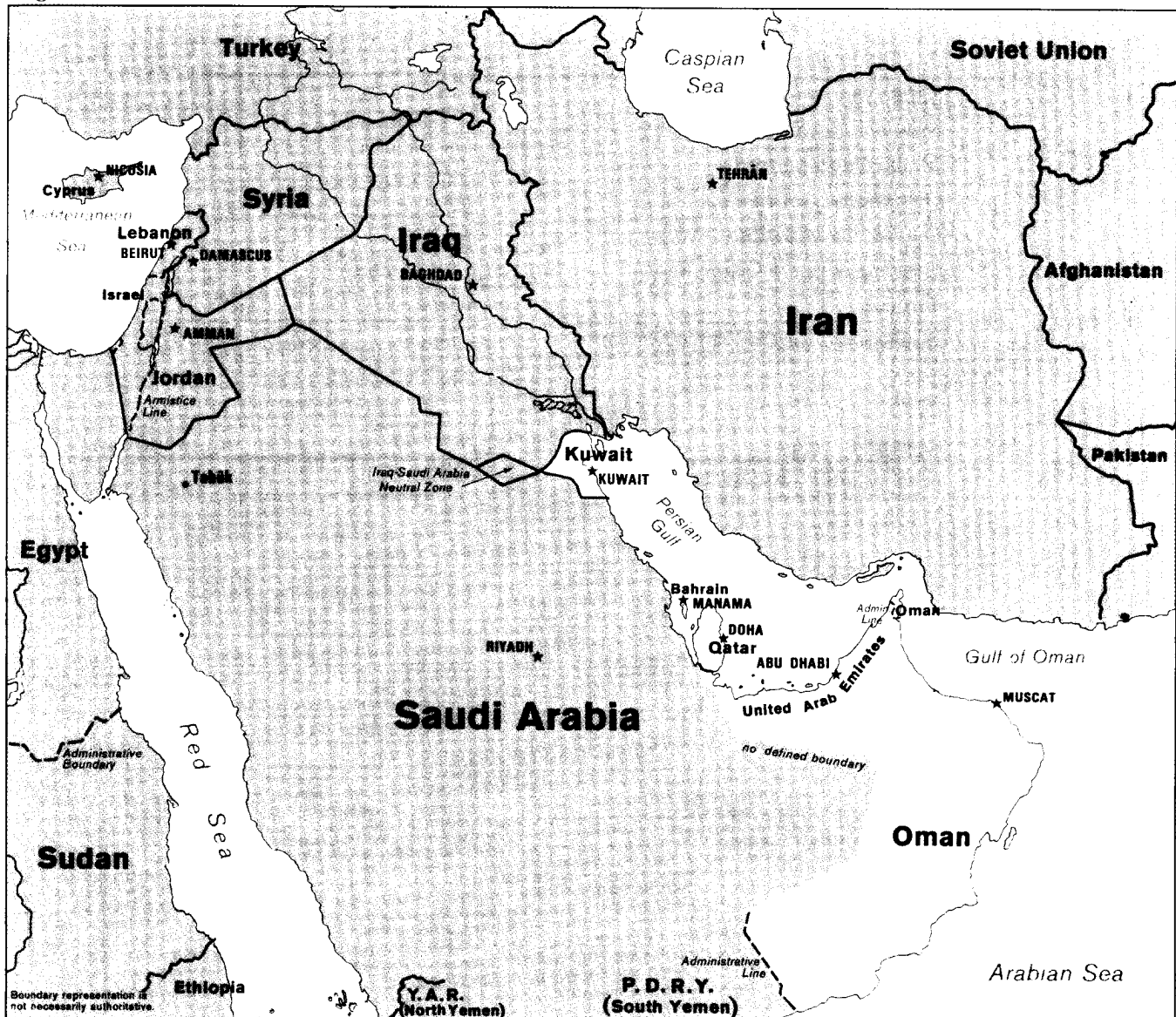
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Figure 1
Regional Armed Forces in the Persian Gulf



Regional Armed Forces: Order of Battle

	<u>Iran</u>	<u>Iraq</u>	<u>Saudi Arabia</u>	<u>Kuwait</u>	<u>Oman</u>	<u>U.A.E.</u>	<u>Bahrain</u>	<u>Qatar</u>
Air Force								
Combat aircraft	65-80 ^a	475	187	41	38 ^b	30	—	14
SAM batteries/launchers	23/293	75/385	15/94	4/27	3/36	2/21	—	1/12
Navy								
Major combatants	7	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Missile boats	10	7	13	—	4	6	1	3
Army								
Brigades	32	140	7	2	2	6	1	1
Personnel	600,000 ^c	650,000	35,000 ^d	10,000	16,000	40,000	2,000	4,000
Tanks	900	3,100	440	235	18	113	—	24
Armored vehicles	900	2,100	1,315	526	82	663	148	227
Artillery	750	1,400	295	75	69	93	8	6

^a Number estimated to be operational.

^b Includes five aircraft in storage.

^c Estimated strength figures vary from 500,000 to 700,000.

^d Does not include 18,000 men in the National Guard.

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**Military Capabilities
of the Smaller
Persian Gulf States**

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Military modernization and regional cooperation among the Arab states along the Persian Gulf were originally stimulated by the British withdrawal from the region in the early 1970s. These activities were accelerated at the end of the decade by the replacement of the Shah with a fundamentalist revolutionary regime in Iran and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The outbreak of the Iran-Iraq war in 1980 and the resulting threat that the war might spread throughout the region added a further sense of urgency to efforts by the smaller Gulf states to increase their military capabilities.¹

Military Threats to the Smaller Gulf States

The smaller Gulf states face a variety of possible threats to their security. These range from Iranian attacks on oil facilities or Iranian-sponsored internal subversion to a massive Soviet invasion to occupy the oilfields.²

Both Iran and Iraq have large military establishments capable of overwhelming the smaller Gulf states. The threat of a major invasion of the Gulf states by either country is remote, however, as long as the Iran-Iraq war continues.

The most likely military threat to the Gulf states, in our judgment, is Iranian attacks in retaliation for continued support of Iraq. Iranian action could take the form of airstrikes or commando raids against oil facilities, further harassment of shipping in the Gulf, or attempts to mine or blockade Gulf ports or the Strait of Hormuz.

¹ This paper focuses on the capabilities, effectiveness, expansion, and military modernization programs of the smaller Gulf states—United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, and Bahrain.

Iran first demonstrated its ability to hit targets in the Gulf by using commandos to destroy Iraqi offshore oil-loading terminals in November 1980 and by an airstrike on Kuwaiti oil facilities in October 1981. Although Tehran's air capabilities have diminished since then, the Iranian Air Force still has approximately 70 operational aircraft and probably can conduct raids against the Gulf states.

The Iranian Government has repeatedly warned that, if its oil exports are disrupted, it will retaliate against countries on the Arabian Peninsula that support Iraq. In late March 1984 the Iraqi Air Force began using its Super Etendard aircraft equipped with Exocet antiship missiles against shipping near Khark Island. The Iranian Air Force initiated retaliatory strikes against Gulf shipping in mid-May, and the Iranian Navy began to stop and board selected merchant ships in the Gulf in late May.

Iranian-backed sabotage and subversion by the Shia and expatriate populations in the Gulf states constitute an additional threat to the security of these states. Since the Iranian revolution five years ago, the Khomeini regime has given paramilitary training and religious indoctrination to more than 1,000 Shias from the Gulf states. We believe Tehran's long-term goal is to establish an organizational and ideological base for the creation of Islamic republics throughout the region. in those states with large Shia populations—Bahrain, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia—Tehran supports formal organizations to recruit Shias and to develop clandestine networks. In states with fewer Shias—UAE, Qatar, and Oman—local Shias are recruited individually for training in Iran.³

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Modernization Efforts

When the British withdrew their forces from the Persian Gulf in 1971, the five smaller Gulf states had virtually no modern military forces. Since that time, each of the Gulf states has sought to improve its military capabilities through expanding forces, acquiring more modern weaponry, and improving operational efficiency. Collectively since 1981 they have explored ways of promoting regional defense through the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). Since the mid-1970s they have acquired more than 100 jet fighters and fighter-bombers, over 20 modern missile-equipped vessels, over 100 modern surface-to-air missile launchers, and thousands of armored vehicles, [REDACTED]

The military modernization programs of these states have given high priority to air and coastal defenses. During the past decade the smaller Gulf states have spent more than \$5 billion procuring fighter aircraft, air defense missiles, and command and control electronics equipment and in building modern, well-equipped airfields. They also have spent almost \$1 billion in constructing new navy bases and acquiring missile attack boats. The states have spent less than a billion dollars, however, to procure more modern equipment for their ground forces. The ground forces have not expanded significantly, and they are equipped with modest numbers of aging tanks, artillery pieces, and antitank weapons. Most of the air force and naval first-phase expansion and modernization efforts are nearing completion.⁴ [REDACTED]

Despite their magnitude, these military programs have not been an unmanageable financial burden for the Gulf states. Economic development and social welfare programs continue to be generously funded, and military expenditures have caused little public resentment, in our view. None of the states, except Kuwait, have a military draft that might contribute to social unrest, and the Kuwaiti draft is easily circumvented. All of the smaller Gulf states already have very large expatriate populations, and the presence of foreigners in the armed forces causes no serious internal political problems for the regimes, in our judgment. [REDACTED]

⁴ For a fuller assessment of the smaller Gulf states' force structures, capabilities, and modernization programs, see the appendix [REDACTED]

Operational Deficiencies

The principal military strength of the smaller Gulf states is their modern weaponry. This advantage, however, is offset by shortages of skilled manpower; difficulties in operating and maintaining military equipment; and inexperience in planning, directing, coordinating, and executing complex military operations. [REDACTED]

The various armed forces receive little training in complex tactics or in coordinating ground, air, and sea operations, according to attache reporting. Field training generally involves no more than simple maneuvers and basic firing exercises. Opposing forces are not used, and combined arms exercises with the different services are rare. Training exercises need to become more realistic and complex before the combat capabilities of the Gulf military forces can be improved, in our view. [REDACTED]

The states already have difficulty maintaining and operating their equipment in peacetime, and the acquisition of additional modern equipment will further strain maintenance capabilities and reduce operational readiness. The quality of pilots relative to the capabilities of their aircraft is likely to decline as pilots convert to more advanced aircraft such as the Mirage F1, the Mirage 2000, and the Tornado. [REDACTED]

All the Gulf states are faced with severe and chronic military manpower shortages, and they must continue to rely on thousands of foreign personnel. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the states are accelerating efforts to train natives for critical positions—such as commanding officers and pilots—but numerous Pakistani, British, and other foreign personnel continue to be needed for equipment maintenance throughout the region. [REDACTED]

Current Capabilities

Because of their manpower, training, and operational deficiencies, the armed forces of the smaller Gulf states remain weak compared to those of Iran and Iraq. The forces of Kuwait, UAE, Bahrain, and Qatar are only marginally effective and individually could not resist major Iranian military moves against them.

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The armed forces in Oman, however, are effective and capable of defeating the Iranians in limited engagements. []

We believe the air defense capabilities of the Gulf states are inadequate to defend against Iranian air strikes. Only Oman could sustain a modestly effective air defense for a week or more. The other four air forces, we believe, would collapse in sustained, high-intensity air operations. []

Air defense is hampered by the proximity of Iranian airbases across the Gulf and the lack of an integrated regional air defense network, in our judgment. The Arab Gulf states would have no more than 15 minutes' warning of an Iranian strike under the best of circumstances. The three air forces that have interceptor squadrons (UAE, Kuwait, and Oman) would have little time to scramble fighters to intercept a surprise Iranian airstrike before it reached the target area. []

Ground-based air defenses in the Gulf states also are inadequate to defend against airstrikes, in our view. Only Kuwait has medium-range surface-to-air missiles. The other four countries are equipped with inadequate numbers of short-range surface-to-air missiles and antiaircraft guns that provide only point defense against air attacks. []

We judge that the navies of the Gulf states have a limited capability to contest an Iranian naval attempt to disrupt shipping. They are not capable of mine-sweeping operations or of reopening the Strait of Hormuz if it is blocked. The five navies have no major surface combatants or minesweepers, but their Exocet-equipped missile boats could sink or heavily damage virtually any ship in the Iranian Navy. All of the navies have inadequate air defense and lack experience in joint operations with their respective air forces. []

The ground forces are adequately equipped and organized, but we believe that, except for Oman, they are poorly motivated and trained and would be quickly overrun in the event of a determined land invasion by one of the regional powers. []

In general, we believe that the smaller Gulf states have taken realistic steps to improve their military capabilities and have acquired as much modern equipment as they are capable of absorbing effectively. Within the individual forces, equipment standardization is well developed and causes few logistic problems, in our view. The GCC as a whole, however, has just begun to address the problem of equipment standardization among the various forces, and the organization's stated goal of equipment interoperability is years away, in our view. []

Growing Military Cooperation

Military cooperation among the Gulf states, which we believe could alleviate some of the weaknesses of the Gulf military forces, is in a formative stage. In 1981, mainly in response to the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq war, the five smaller Gulf states and Saudi Arabia formed the Gulf Cooperation Council. Following the Iranian-backed coup attempt in Bahrain in December 1981, the states focused on the increased threat from Iran. The six states are addressing regional air defense, joint action against internal subversion and external attacks, and acquisition of common military equipment.⁵ []

In late 1983 and early 1984 the members of the Council held their first joint military exercises. The exercises were rudimentary in their tactics, in our judgment, but were the first practical steps toward improving regional military cooperation. The exercises also demonstrated the growing ability of the Gulf states to transport units and execute maneuvers outside their home territories (see inset). []

Much still remains to be done, however, to overcome the political and military obstacles to effective cooperation. The GCC has made little progress in establishing a permanent command structure or in sharing national command authority, a political problem we believe is unlikely to be resolved in the near future, if at all. In particular, the Gulf states have not established a combined command structure for air defense

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Gulf State Joint Military Exercises

Peninsula Shield. *Peninsula Shield, the first joint exercise by the Gulf states, was held near Al Hamra in the western UAE during 6-22 October 1983. Peninsula Shield was primarily a field training exercise for ground forces, and contingents from all six GCC states participated,* [REDACTED]

The major accomplishment of the exercise, in our judgment, was the efficient movement of sizable forces to the UAE from the other GCC states. Beginning on 2 October, 18 Saudi Air Force C-130s airlifted elements of the Saudi airborne brigade stationed at Tabuk 1,300 kilometers to the UAE. This airlift included the unit's vehicles, crew-served weapons, and artillery, as well as 1,000 paratroopers,

[REDACTED] *The Saudi C-130s also airlifted a Bahraini infantry unit into the training area.* [REDACTED]

Kuwait moved a mechanized infantry battalion by air and road to the UAE. Heavy-lift transporters carried the battalion's equipment along the coastal roads to the exercise area. Saudi Air Force F-15s provided air cover for the convoy while it was in Saudi Arabia, according to US military officers. The 750-kilometer trip was completed in two days,

Air Exercises. *Kuwait and Saudi Arabia followed the ground exercise with two joint air exercises in November 1983 and January 1984. Oman and the UAE held a similar exercise in February 1984.* [REDACTED]

The three large air exercises provided useful insights for the participants into the different equipment and doctrines of the Gulf air forces. They also allowed more realistic training for fighter pilots, air defense crews, and command and control components and demonstrated the ability of the participating states to deploy and maintain aircraft away from their home bases. [REDACTED]

forces or channels for sharing targeting information that could shorten their reaction time during an air attack. They have not established the necessary radar early warning networks, compatible communications equipment, and interoperable air defense weapon systems. Even if political differences within the GCC are resolved, it will be years before an effective regional air defense network is established. [REDACTED]

Outlook

We judge that the military forces of the smaller Gulf states are likely to make only slow progress in remedying their operational deficiencies and in improving cooperation in the next few years. The smaller Gulf states will continue to have difficulty in absorbing, maintaining, and effectively using the new weapons entering their inventories. Efforts by the individual states to expand training programs, improve command and control, and enhance the readiness of equipment and units will slowly improve the overall effectiveness of their forces but are unlikely to produce dramatic results. [REDACTED]

Because of these problems, the smaller Gulf states are likely to concentrate on assimilating weapon systems already present or on order rather than on acquiring large numbers of additional advanced weapons. Reporting from Embassy and attache sources indicates that the Gulf armed forces do not plan to expand significantly beyond their present size. Still, some modern equipment remains to be delivered, and the states also plan to continue slowly replacing older equipment with new weaponry. [REDACTED]

The acquisition of more modern weaponry will have the greatest impact on the air forces and navies. By the end of 1986 the air forces of Kuwait, Oman, and the UAE will have replaced most of their older aircraft with modern fighters, and Bahrain will have fighter aircraft for the first time. By the end of this summer, Kuwait will receive eight West German-built missile boats to give its fledgling Navy its first combatants. Bahrain has ambitious plans for expanding its small flotilla of patrol vessels, and Kuwait and Qatar are acquiring helicopters armed with antiship missiles. [REDACTED]

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Figure 2. Ground units during Peninsula Shield. [redacted]



Weekly Gulf Times ©

The inexperience of the military forces of the Gulf states in using their new aircraft, ships, and surface-to-air missiles will continue to hamper, in our view, the coordination of air defense within individual states and effective air support to the army and navy. It will also inhibit the conduct of complex joint exercises among the Gulf states. [redacted]

Implications for the United States

For the near future the smaller Gulf states will need major power assistance to defend successfully against conventional military attack, in our judgment. Continued GCC military cooperation and force modernization programs will increase the ability of the Gulf states to resist an attack until friendly forces arrive, as well as provide a multilateral framework for Western involvement. Although the smaller Gulf states could not individually defend against most conventional threats, together they can field a sizable and generally well-equipped force that, we judge, can contribute to a multilateral defense of the Arabian Peninsula in concert with the United States and other outside powers. [redacted]

Although these Gulf states are often critical of US policies, the recent Iranian attacks on tankers have caused some of them to seek limited US military support. Additional requests for US assistance are likely if Iranian attacks in the Gulf increase, in our judgment. We believe the Gulf states will turn to the United States for more specific guarantees of military assistance, although they will be reluctant to undertake highly visible joint planning and military cooperation. The extent of their willingness to cooperate with Washington—beyond seeking assurances of support—will depend on their sense of imminent danger and their judgment of the reliability of the United States as a protector. [redacted]

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Appendix

Smaller Gulf State Armed Forces

Air Forces

UAE. The backbone of the 3,000-man UAE Air Force is two squadrons of Mirage-III/5 fighter-bombers based near the capital of Abu Dhabi. The Mirages are aging, and one squadron will be replaced by 18 Mirage 2000 fighters that were purchased in 1983, according to US Embassy reporting. The replacement aircraft for the second squadron has not been chosen, but the A-10, F-20, Mirage 2000, and F-16 have all been considered. Other aircraft include six Gazelle helicopters equipped with HOT antitank missiles and a number of combat-capable jet trainers. Within the Emirates, Dubayy maintains an independent air wing equipped with 10 Aermacchi MB 326 light strike/trainer aircraft and a few helicopters and small transports, but its military potential is negligible.

[REDACTED]

The UAE Air Force, like other services of the Gulf states, depends heavily on foreign personnel to maintain and operate its equipment. Until mid-1983 the Air Force was commanded by a seconded Pakistani officer. Pakistanis still perform almost all of the maintenance and even pilot some of the Mirages, according to Embassy reporting. [REDACTED]

We believe that senior Air Force officers are determined that eventually only UAE pilots will fly combat aircraft. To eliminate the need for foreign pilots, the UAE last year graduated its first class of pilots and may sign a pilot training agreement with Morocco, according to Embassy reporting. The Air Force probably can reach its training goals within a few years, but the pilot-to-aircraft ratio is unlikely to exceed 1:1, too low to allow the Air Force to fly all of its aircraft at once or to sustain combat operations for more than a short period. In addition, it will take several years before enough new pilots are trained to fly combat missions in the advanced models of aircraft likely to be acquired. The already limited combat capabilities of the Air Force may decline while the training and new equipment programs are in progress. [REDACTED]

To increase the flexibility of the Air Force, a third squadron composed of ground attack aircraft, either



Figure 3. French Mirage 2000. [REDACTED]

Weekly Defense Review ©

the F-16 or A-10, may be formed as a complement to the new French interceptors. Another option being discussed is rebuilding the UAE's Mirage-III/5s, but the reported cost and limited capabilities of these aircraft probably preclude this option. Other expansion plans include the purchase of a squadron of attack helicopters armed with antitank missiles to support the Army. [REDACTED]

Air defense in the UAE is hampered by the short combat radius of the Mirage-III/5. The main fighter airbase at Abu Dhabi is too far from the Strait of Hormuz for the Mirages to conduct combat missions there or over Dubayy, Ash Shariqah, and the other emirates in the northeastern part of the federation. In late 1983, in response to increased Iranian threats to the Gulf states, the UAE Air Force deployed almost one-third of its Mirages from the base at Abu Dhabi to the international airport at Ash Shariqah, accord-

[REDACTED] Although the Mirages can patrol the Strait of Hormuz and the northern emirates from this airfield, they are more vulnerable to an Iranian airstrike or sabotage. [REDACTED]

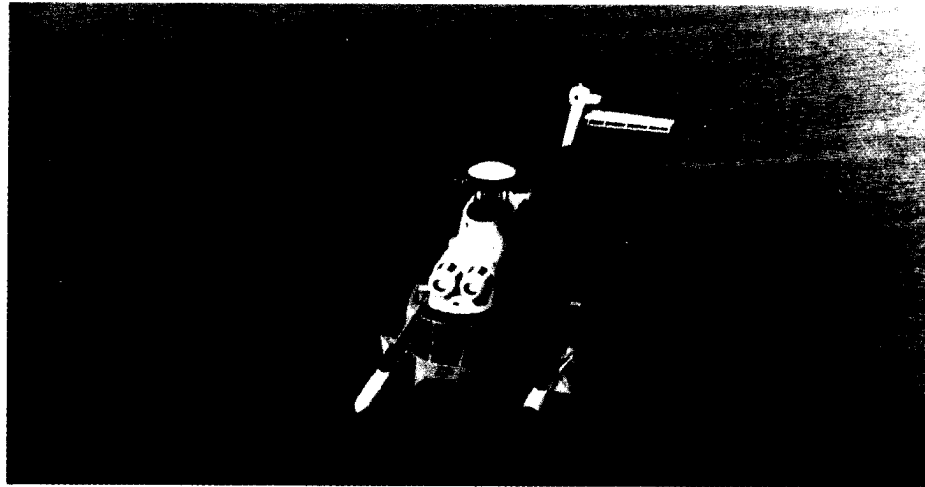
We believe the continued reliance on Pakistani pilots will hinder effective air defense [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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Figure 4. French Super Puma helicopter with Exocet antiship missile [redacted]



International Defense Review ©

[redacted]

The Air Force cannot provide effective ground support to the Army. The two services rarely conduct realistic joint training exercises, and the short combat radius of the Mirages is further decreased when heavily loaded with ground attack ordnance. In the event of major hostilities, we believe that the operational readiness of the Mirages will quickly decline and that the few remaining operational aircraft will most likely be primarily involved in air defense missions. The Army will have to rely on Air Force attack helicopters for air support. [redacted]

Kuwait. The 4,000-man Kuwaiti Air Force—the largest in the smaller Gulf states—suffers from a low readiness rate and too few proficient pilots. The Air Force has one fighter squadron, two ground attack squadrons, two helicopter attack squadrons, two transport squadrons, and a training squadron. The most effective combat unit is the fighter squadron equipped with 14 Mirage F1 fighters and Matra air-to-air missiles. This squadron has a higher operational readiness rate than the two A-4-equipped ground attack squadrons. All of the fighter pilots are Kuwaitis, but aircraft maintenance is almost totally carried out by foreign contract personnel, primarily Pakistani, [redacted] Few

fighter pilots have fired live air-to-air missiles, according to Embassy reporting, and exercises involving close air support for the Army are rare. A few aircraft reacted to Iranian airstrikes against border outposts and oil facilities in Kuwait in 1981, but the experience highlighted operational deficiencies and tactical constraints. The shortage of trained pilots and the limited number of operating bases limit the ability of the Air Force to sustain combat operations. Any damage to either of Kuwait's two airbases will immediately degrade Air Force combat capabilities. [redacted]

The Air Force also lacks the necessary radar and command and control structure to provide adequate warning of hostile airstrikes. Even with such radars, the lack of fully trained pilots means that Kuwait cannot prevent attacks against critical economic targets—including oil installations and water desalination plants. In addition, the Mirage aircraft have inadequate IFF (Identification Friend or Foe) equipment, and the A-4 aircraft lack an all-weather capability. [redacted]

The two ground attack squadrons and the two helicopter attack squadrons, we believe, can provide limited air support to the Army for a short time. Joint training exercises with the Saudi Air Force in late 1983 and early 1984 indicate that the A-4 squadrons can sustain high sortie rates for several days, according to US military personnel. The small size of the

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Table 1*Number of units***Smaller Gulf States: Aircraft Inventories,
1984 and 1990**

	Fighters/ Fighter- Bombers		Attack Helicopters		Combat Trainers	
	1984	1990 ^a	1984	1990 ^a	1984	1990 ^a
Total	123	132-136	32	64	45	69
UAE	30	30 ^b	6	36 ^b	14 ^b	28
Kuwait	41	50 ^b	23	20 ^b	9	9 ^b
Oman	38	30 ^b			14	14
Qatar	14	14	3	8	8	8
Bahrain		8-12				10 ^b

^a Projected.^b Data reflect minimum projections. Totals could be higher.

country puts potential frontlines easily within range of the ground attack aircraft, greatly facilitating Air Force efforts to provide close support to the Army.

New equipment programs will increase the number and improve the quality of the Air Force's weaponry but will compound existing manpower and maintenance problems. These programs include the delivery of a second squadron of Mirage F1 fighters, an electronics upgrading of the existing Mirage fighters, and the purchase of six Puma helicopters equipped with Exocet antiship missiles. Faced with chronic manpower shortages, however, the Air Force will remain dependent on foreign personnel to provide essential aircraft maintenance.

Oman. The 2,500-man Omani Air Force has the highest combat capability of the smaller Gulf states. Its aggressive British and British-trained pilots, realistic training, and well-maintained equipment give it a high operational readiness rate and the best ground support and light strike capability of the smaller Gulf states. Until the recently purchased British Tornado fighters are deployed in the late 1980s, however, Oman's air defenses will remain dependent on the two Jaguar fighter-bomber squadrons and a squadron equipped with aging Hawker Hunters. Neither airplane is particularly well suited for an air defense role.

Another major drawback for the Air Force is the location of its three main operating bases. The main Air Force base at Thumrait is in the southern part of the country near the border with South Yemen and is ill suited for staging operations over the northern part of the country and the Strait of Hormuz. The second major base at As Sib, outside the capital, houses no combat squadrons and is also an international airport. It will need better fueling capabilities and aircraft shelters to become a fully combat-capable airbase. The newest airbase on Masirah Island, recently upgraded with new facilities and aircraft revetments constructed by the United States, houses a recently formed Jaguar fighter-bomber squadron.

The five light transport squadrons regularly provide support to the Army throughout the country. Airlift exercises with the Army are frequent, and the Air Force can quickly move an infantry battalion to any part of the country.

The recent Air Force expansion and the shortage of trained Omani pilots and technicians will reinforce the Omani Air Force's dependence on the British, The deployment of the Tornado fighter and the possible purchase of additional advanced aircraft, moreover, will require the continued presence of British pilots for at least several years.

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Qatar. The 250-man Qatari Air Force has very limited combat capabilities. Its small number of fixed-wing aircraft can provide almost no air defense or ground support. Ground attack capabilities depend on the helicopter wing equipped with light attack helicopters. The Air Force is heavily dependent on foreign personnel from Pakistan and Great Britain to provide both maintenance and pilots and will remain so for the near future. [REDACTED]

Planned improvements include the delivery of a squadron of 14 Mirage F1 fighters this summer and eight Sea King helicopters equipped with the Exocet antiship missile. The new equipment will be a significant improvement, but it will take several years before Air Force pilots and maintenance personnel are fully trained. [REDACTED]

Bahrain. The 100-man Bahraini Air Wing, consisting of only a few helicopters and no fixed-wing aircraft, has only token combat capabilities. Planned improvements include the construction of Bahrain's first airbase and the formation of a fighter aircraft squadron. Although Bahrain has a few pilots undergoing training in Saudi Arabia on the F-5E fighter, it still has not decided which fighter aircraft to purchase, according to US Embassy reporting. The government has considered the F-5E, F-16C, F-20, and Mirage F1. [REDACTED]

In addition, agreement on the source of funding for the purchase program has not been realized. The new acquisitions will compound the Air Wing's severe manpower shortages and dependence on Pakistani, Jordanian, and Indian pilots and maintenance personnel. [REDACTED]

Air Defenses

UAE. The UAE air defense brigade is deployed near the capital of Abu Dhabi and consists of a battery (nine launchers) equipped with the French-made Crotale, a battery (12 launchers) of the British-made Rapier, and two regiments of light, towed antiaircraft guns. The surface-to-air missile equipment was delivered in the early 1970s, and we judge that not all of the launchers are operational because of poor maintenance. The independent Army brigade in Dubayy is equipped with a few hand-held RBS-70 short-range surface-to-air missiles. [REDACTED]

The UAE plans a substantial improvement in its ground-based air defenses. One of the antiaircraft regiments will be reequipped with 19 Swiss 35-mm Oerlikon antiaircraft guns purchased in early 1983. In late 1983 the UAE purchased five batteries (47 launchers) of the US I-Hawk missile, to be delivered over the next four years, according to US Embassy reporting. The I-Hawk system was chosen, in part, because it is compatible with Saudi Arabia's air defense system. The need for at least 400 personnel to man the new I-Hawk system, however, will strain the UAE's limited base of trainable manpower. [REDACTED]

In addition, the five I-Hawk batteries are not likely to be based in locations that maximize the air defense of the UAE as a whole. Each of the emirates within the federation retains considerable autonomy and will apply political pressure on the federal government for air defenses, and this will affect deployment locations. [REDACTED]

Kuwait. Kuwait's air defense brigade is equipped with four batteries (27 launchers) of I-Hawk surface-to-air missiles, a battalion of short-range, hand-held Soviet SA-7 surface-to-air missiles, and a battalion of towed antiaircraft guns. The I-Hawks provide area coverage; the short-range SA-7s and the antiaircraft guns are capable of providing only limited point defense. [REDACTED]

The air defense brigade gained limited combat experience during Iranian airstrikes in 1981 when a border outpost and a gas oil separation plant were attacked. All of the component battalions were deployed during the raid, but no Iranian aircraft were shot down. [REDACTED]

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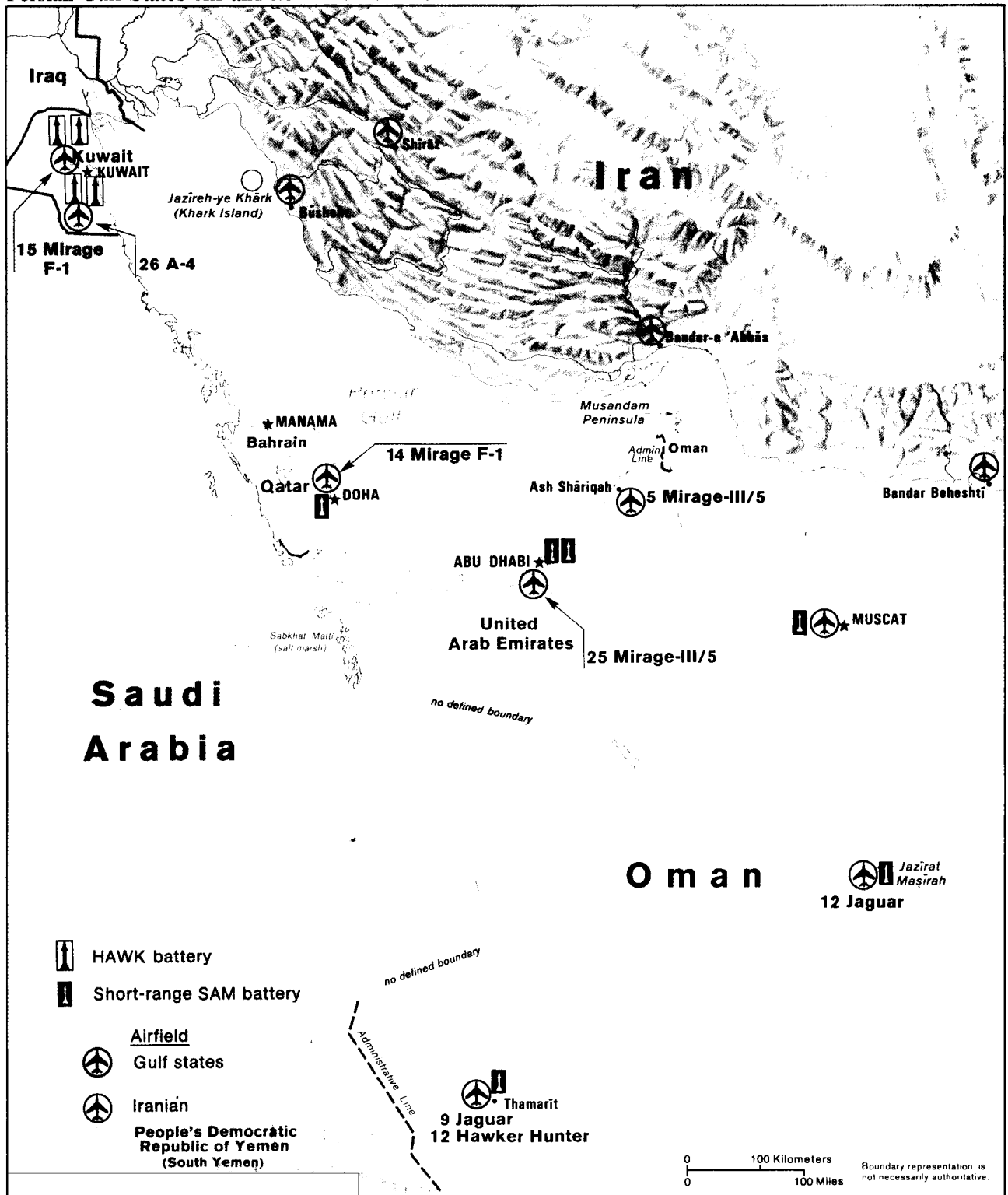
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Figure 5
Persian Gulf States' Air and Air Defense Forces

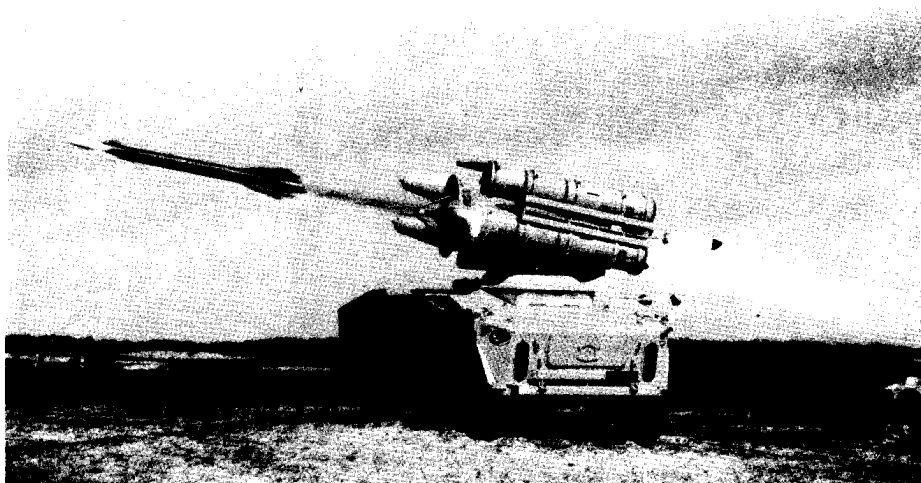


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Figure 6. French Crotale surface-to-air missile. [redacted]



International Defense Review ©

Kuwait's air defense does not have a centralized command and control center and suffers from the same lack of training and manpower shortages as its other forces. The I-Hawk batteries depend on US contractors for maintenance and are frequently only 30 percent operational [redacted]

[redacted] Even when operational, poorly trained and motivated crews seriously impair the effectiveness of the system, [redacted]

Planned improvements include a \$200 million command and control project agreed upon in late 1983 with France. New equipment purchases include a battalion of 12 Soviet advanced model SA-8 surface-to-air missiles, scheduled to be delivered in late 1984, that will be used to reequip the antiaircraft artillery battalion, according to Embassy reporting. Kuwait has expressed interest in additional Soviet air defense weapon systems. [redacted]

Oman. Omani ground-based air defense is capable of providing only point defense around selected military installations. Fighter aircraft are used for area defense. The Omani Air Force includes three squadrons (36 launchers) of the low-level, short-range Rapier surface-to-air missiles that normally are deployed around the three main airbases. The Air Force,



Figure 7. Omani soldier with hand-held surface-to-air missile. [redacted]

Times of Oman ©

however, practices deploying the Rapiers to remote parts of the country, including the Musandam Peninsula on the Strait of Hormuz. Air defense in the Army is provided by a few hand-held SA-7 surface-to-air missiles and newly acquired British Blowpipe surface-to-air missiles. In addition, the Army is planning to form a small antiaircraft artillery unit, according to attache reporting. [redacted]

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Table 2
Smaller Gulf States: Air Defense Weapons,
1984 and 1990

Number of units

	I-Hawk SAM Launchers		Short-Range SAM Launchers		Hand-Held SAM Launchers		Antiaircraft Artillery	
	1984	1990 ^a	1984	1990 ^a	1984	1990 ^a	1984	1990 ^a
Total	27	74	69	81	801	1,105	136	258
UAE		47	21	21	13	13	60 ^b	138
Kuwait	27	27		12	700	700	60 ^b	84
Oman			36	36	56	360		20
Qatar			12	12	18	18		
Bahrain					14	14	16	16

^a Projected.^b Additional guns may be in storage.

Qatar. Ground-based air defense in Qatar is provided by 12 recently delivered British Rapier surface-to-air missiles. The air defense radar early warning net, however, is inadequate to provide sufficient warning time. In the event of an Iranian airstrike, Qatari air defense—unless at maximum alert—probably could not engage attacking aircraft effectively.

Budgetary constraints and a debate over spending more money on the Navy, we believe, will probably preclude further expansion of the Navy in the near future. The purchase of additional ships was also discouraged by the former Egyptian commander of the Navy, who retired last year, until the current ships are fully integrated into the service, according to Embassy reporting.

Bahrain. Ground-based air defense in Bahrain consists of a handful of light antiaircraft guns and a few short-range hand-held surface-to-air missiles that cannot provide more than a point defense for a few selected facilities. The island of Bahrain, however, is partly protected by Saudi I-Hawk batteries based at Dhahran.

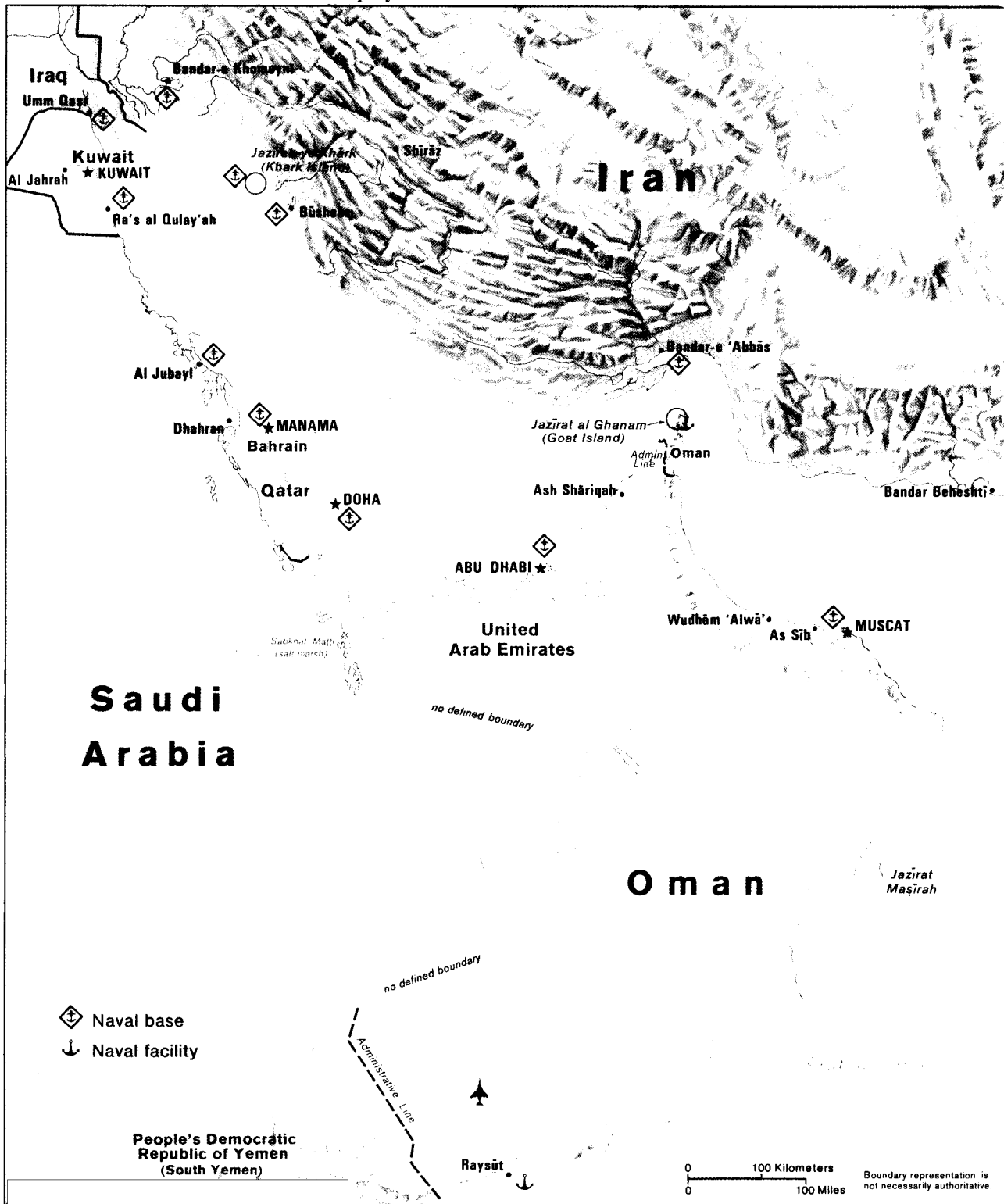
Of the UAE's services, the Navy probably has the highest percentage of local personnel. The new commander and almost all deck officers are natives, and only below-deck officers and enlisted personnel are foreign, primarily Pakistanis, Sudanese, Omanis, and Egyptians.

Navies

UAE. The UAE Navy is designed to be a coastal patrol force and probably cannot carry out its primary mission of protecting offshore oil facilities. The Navy is equipped with six German-built patrol boats armed with Exocet antiship missiles and six British-built patrol boats. In addition, it has a few small, lightly armed US and British coastal patrol boats. The Navy's only operating base is at Abu Dhabi, although the UAE has held exploratory talks with the French about constructing additional bases along the coast.

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Figure 8
Persian Gulf States' Naval Forces Deployment



Naval Forces	Iran	Iraq	Saudi Arabia	Kuwait	Oman	UAE	Bahrain	Qatar
Personnel	15,000	4,500	3,000+	600	1,500	1,500	100	700
Major combatants (destroyers, frigates)	7	(4)	(4)	—	—	—	—	—
Corvettes	3	(6)	4	—	—	—	—	—
Missile boats	10	7	13	(8)	4	6	1 (1)	3
Torpedo/ gunboats	—	12	3	—	4	6	2	6

Numbers in parentheses indicate ships on order

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Table 3
Smaller Gulf States: Selected Naval Forces,
1984 and 1990*Number of units*

	Missile Patrol Boats		Oceangoing Patrol Boats		Medium Landing Craft		Coastal Defense Missile Batteries	
	1984	1990 ^a	1984	1990 ^a	1984	1990 ^a	1984	1990 ^a
Total	14	22	18	26	2	2	2	2
UAE	6	6	6	6				
Kuwait		8						
Oman	4	3	4	4	1	1		
Qatar	3	3	6	6			2	2
Bahrain	1	2	2	10 ^b	1	1		

^a Projected.^b Data reflect minimum projections. Totals could be higher.

Kuwait. The Kuwaiti Navy has no combat capabilities. The fledgling 600-man force has a newly completed naval base south of Kuwait City and no combatants. Coastal patrolling is conducted by the 400-man coast guard equipped with 40 small, lightly armed coastal patrol craft. [REDACTED]

Expansion plans call for a 2,000-man navy with eight missile boats equipped with Exocet antiship missiles purchased from West Germany to be delivered in late summer 1984. Two of the missile boats were launched in 1983, and crews are undergoing training in Germany. [REDACTED]

Oman. The Omani Navy can conduct combat operations in the Gulf of Oman and is the most effective and experienced navy in the region. Commanded by a seconded British rear admiral, the 1,500-man navy consists of four Exocet antiship missile-equipped patrol boats, four oceangoing patrol boats, four coastal patrol boats, and seven support ships. British officers continue to hold important positions in the service; many of the shipboard naval technicians are Pakistani; and virtually all maintenance is performed by Pakistanis, according to Embassy reporting. [REDACTED]

The Omani Navy is experienced in monitoring commercial shipping in the Strait of Hormuz from its base on Goat Island and frequently conducts training exercises there. These have included assault landings with shore bombardments and close air support, as well as small exercises with the US Navy, according to defense attache reporting. In reaction to Iranian threats to close the Strait of Hormuz in late 1983, the Omani Navy stepped up operations near the Strait and deployed one of its Exocet missile boats to its base on Goat Island near the Musandam Peninsula, ac-

Planned improvements include the construction of a new naval base at Wudam Alwa, closer to the Strait of Hormuz than the present main operating base at Muscat. [REDACTED]

Qatar. The Qatari Navy has a limited capability to conduct combat operations near its coast. The 700-man Navy consists of three Exocet-equipped missile boats and six patrol boats. In addition, two truck-mounted Exocet coastal defense batteries are on order. The Navy is plagued by the same manpower

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shortages as Qatar's other services and is heavily dependent on foreign personnel for maintenance and crews, according to Embassy reporting. The Exocet-equipped missile boats were delivered in 1983, and it will probably take the Navy at least another year before all the ships are fully combat capable. There are no further expansion plans. [REDACTED]

Bahrain. The small Bahraini Navy has a very limited capability to conduct operations near its coast. The Navy consists of a newly delivered Exocet-equipped attack boat, two patrol boats, and a landing ship. The Navy has conducted rudimentary training operations with Saudi minesweepers based in the Gulf. [REDACTED]

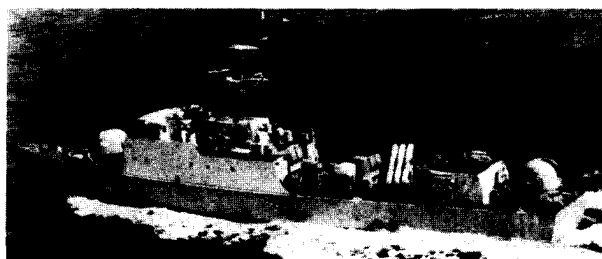


Figure 10. Omani Exocet-equipped Province. [REDACTED] Naval Review ©

Expansion plans include the delivery of two additional missile attack boats and indefinite plans for the purchase of additional patrol boats, according to Embassy reporting. [REDACTED]

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Ground Forces

UAE. The UAE's Army of approximately 34,000 men consists of five combat maneuver brigades (one armored, one mechanized infantry, two infantry, and one Royal Guard) and combat support units, including one artillery brigade, an air defense brigade, a special forces unit, and an engineer unit. The Emirate of Dubayy maintains a separate infantry brigade of 6,000 men that essentially is an independent unit. The Army can provide substantial assistance to internal security forces. If faced with a serious land invasion, however, we believe that the Army could not maintain a coherent defense for more than a few days and would quickly collapse without outside assistance.

Defense planning in the UAE is complicated by continuing political disputes among the emirates. Interemirate security cooperation has deteriorated in recent years, and three of the seven emirates have or plan to establish independent military forces.

As much as 60 percent of Army personnel are foreigners from 21 countries, but primarily Omani tribesmen, according to Embassy reporting. Because of the large proportion of foreigners in the Army, the government is uneasy about its political reliability. The UAE leadership remains concerned over Omani irredentism—a concern sustained by Oman's refusal to establish diplomatic representation in Abu Dhabi. A strike in early 1984 by Omanis in the Army protesting pay and benefit cuts only reinforces government unease about the Army.

Of the many nationalities in the Army, the Moroccans play a disproportionate role. The approximately 1,500 to 2,000 Moroccans constitute a cadre of reliable troops that has become a powerful praetorian guard. They help man the Army's two tank battalions; they partly man the artillery brigade; and they exclusively man two companies of the special forces unit deployed on Abu Dhabi Island.

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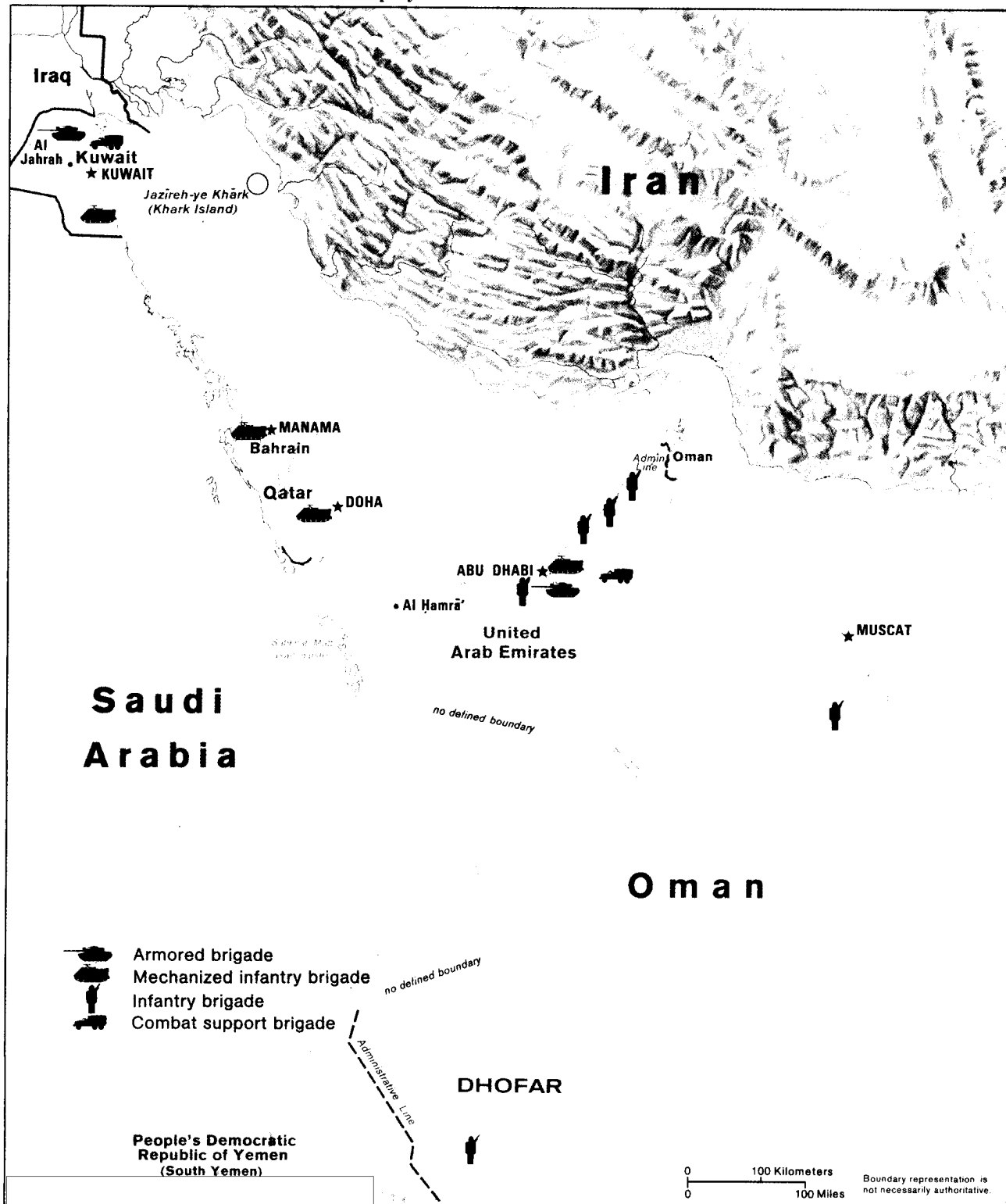
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Figure 12
Persian Gulf States' Ground Forces Deployment



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The 6th Royal Guard Brigade, containing only Abu Dhabians or Moroccans, was the first unit to be equipped with French equipment, the AMX-30 tank and the AMX-10 armored personnel carrier. This unit is responsible for maintaining security in the capital and protecting the Abu Dhabi royal family, [REDACTED]

The special forces unit, approximately 900 men, is comprised primarily of local personnel and Moroccans and is equipped with light trucks and light weapons. This unit has had airborne training, and we believe it may be designated part of the GCC's Rapid Movement Force [REDACTED]

The Army does not conduct frequent or realistic field training exercises. Its first large exercise in over three years, in January 1983, simulated defense against an amphibious assault and airdrop on oil facilities. In October 1983 the UAE was host to the first GCC joint military exercise in which several of its units participated, [REDACTED] The Dubayy Defense Force did not participate in either exercise. [REDACTED]

The Army is equipped primarily with French and British equipment but has shown interest in US material. The Army plans to form a helicopter attack unit armed with antitank missiles, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Additional equipment purchases under study include US TOW antitank missiles and new tanks, according to Embassy reporting, [REDACTED]

Kuwait. Kuwait's 10,000-man Army is organized into two combat brigades (one armored and one mechanized infantry), a combat support brigade, and support units. The bulk of the Army is deployed 20 kilometers north of Kuwait City at Al Jahrah. In the event of a ground invasion, the armored brigade and the combat support brigade (which includes artillery and Frog-7 surface-to-surface rocket units) would defend the Mutla Pass, immediately north of Al Jahrah. The mechanized infantry brigade, stationed south of the capital, would defend the coastline or provide reinforcements to the Al Jahrah area, depending on the threat. [REDACTED]

We estimate that the Kuwaiti Army could not maintain a coherent defense for more than a few days against an invasion by either Iran or Iraq. Major outside assistance would be needed almost immediately to prevent a collapse of Kuwaiti defenses. [REDACTED]

Bedouin tribesmen from the border areas near Iraq and Saudi Arabia comprise at least 80 percent of the Army. Even the commander of the Army's armored brigade is a Saudi Bedouin, and most of the troops in his brigade are from the same tribe, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Bedouin Army personnel probably place a higher value on loyalty to officers from the same tribe than to officers who are Kuwaiti. The strong influence of tribal loyalties could have a major impact on the reliability of Army units during a crisis. [REDACTED]

Native Kuwaitis dominate the officer corps but make up less than 20 percent of the Army. Overall reenlistment rates for the Army are low (under 15 percent), [REDACTED] a factor that helps perpetuate reliance on the Bedouin tribesmen. [REDACTED]

The Army has more modern weapons than it can effectively absorb. Equipment includes Chieftain tanks, M-113 armored personnel carriers, US and French self-propelled artillery, TOW antitank missiles, and Soviet Frog surface-to-surface rockets. The crews are poorly trained and motivated, and much of the equipment suffers from poor maintenance. Because of equipment failures, commonly due to the reluctance of crews to perform even the most routine maintenance, we judge that the capabilities of the Army will continue to be limited [REDACTED]

Oman. The 16,000-man Omani Army is a highly capable light infantry force with extensive counterinsurgency experience. Its commander, British Maj. Gen. John Watts, commanded a Gurkha brigade and the elite Special Air Services Regiment in the British Army. According to the US defense attache, he is popular with the Omanis. [REDACTED]

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Figure 13. Omani light infantry.

The Army is an effective counterinsurgency force, but its ability to deal with a conventional attack from Iran or South Yemen would be hampered by a shortage of antitank weapons and tanks, limited artillery support, and a weak logistics organization. The mountainous terrain and narrow coastal belt in Dhofar Province, however, favor defense and would put severe logistic constraints on South Yemen's ability to concentrate forces for a conventional attack in the border region. The Army units in the northern part of the country near Iran would have to be quickly reinforced to defend against an Iranian landing on the Musandam Peninsula. Were the Iranians to succeed in taking the peninsula, an Omani counterattack would have to take the form of an amphibious assault supported by airstrikes. In our judgment, the Omani armed forces probably could not mount such an operation without outside assistance.

The Omani Army is organized into two infantry brigades and combat support units. The two infantry brigades contain eight infantry battalions, three of which are composed exclusively of Baluchis recruited in Pakistan. The Baluch battalions, commanded by British or Baluch officers, contain 4,000 men and are permanently deployed in defensive positions along the border with South Yemen. The other five are Omani infantry battalions—two stationed in Dhofar Province and three garrisoned in northern Oman. The Omani battalions regularly rotate with each other so that all five are familiar with and have experience in the South Yemen border area. Combat support units include a small armored "regiment" with 18 tanks and some armored cars, an artillery regiment, and a

Table 4
Smaller Gulf States: Ground Forces

	Personnel	Armored Brigades	Mechanized Infantry Brigades	Infantry Brigades	Artillery/ Combat Support Brigades
Total	72,000	2	5	5	4
UAE ^a	40,000	1	2	3	2
Kuwait	10,000	1	1		1
Oman	16,000			2	1+
Qatar	4,000		1		
Bahrain	2,000		1		

^a Includes the independent brigade in Dubayy.

company-size airborne unit. Special combat units include several small territorial security units deployed in northern Oman.

Additional ground force units not under the command of the Ministry of Defense include the Royal Guard Brigade and the Special Forces units. These units are nominally commanded by the Sultan and report directly to the royal palace,

The Royal Guard Brigade of approximately 3,000 men is commanded by a British officer and provides security for the Sultan and royal facilities. The brigade is equipped with French armored cars, light antitank weapons, and light, crew-served weapons.

The Special Forces unit of 300 to 400 personnel is primarily designed to play an antiterrorist role. It is also used for counterinsurgency operations in the South Yemen border area,

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Table 5
Smaller Gulf States: Selected
Ground Force Equipment

	UAE	Kuwait	Oman	Qatar	Bahrain
Tanks					
Total	113	235	18	24	
Chieftain		165	12		
M-60			6		
AMX-30	95			24	
Other	18	70			
Armored vehicles					
Total	663	526	82	227	148
AMX-10p	18			18	
M-113		175			
Saracen		136		27	
AML-M-3	333				110
VAB/VTT				150	
Scorpion	76		31		
Saladin	69	114	41		8
Ferret	77	101	10	12	8
AML-90	90				22
Cascavel				20	
Artillery					
Total	93	75^a	69	6	8
Self-propelled	21	59		6	
Towed 105 mm and up	72	16 ^a	69		8
Surface-to-surface rocket launchers					
FROG 7		12			
Antitank guided missile launchers	79	88	60		50

^a Minimum estimate.

Qatar. The Qatari Army is a brigade-size force of approximately 4,000 men equipped with British and French equipment. It consists of a battalion-size armored arm, an infantry brigade, and an artillery battalion. In our judgment, the Army could not defend against a major land attack. It could provide major assistance to the internal security forces. []

The Army is heavily dependent on foreigners from over 20 Arab and South Asian countries for maintenance and personnel. The Qatari contingent to the GCC exercise in October had to be reduced because of the requirement that no foreign personnel be included, [] The Ranger unit trains with the British Special Air Services Regiment and is probably one of the more effective units. []

Bahrain. The Bahrain Defense Force consists of a 2,000-man infantry battalion equipped primarily with armored cars and light weapons. We believe that the force has virtually no combat capabilities beyond guarding against Iranian commando raids and providing assistance to the internal security forces. []

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